

Tillie Fowler had a sparkle in her eye, and she had a warm way about her. We enjoyed her company. I think everybody who dealt with her respected Tillie Fowler's intelligence, her compassion, and her serious interest in making good policy for the country. I respected her contribution to her State and to our country. My wife and I commented many times after that trip what a delightful time we had with Tillie Fowler. We express our condolences to the family as well.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I join my colleague from North Carolina in expressing my condolences to the family, and express how much I respected Tillie Fowler.

I had an opportunity to say hello to her a little over a week ago. She was so happy and vibrant. Her sudden passing was very much a shock to me. It reminds all of us just how fragile life can be.

I had an opportunity to get to know Tillie Fowler when I served in the U.S. House of Representatives with her. She was a wonderful person and highly respected in the House of Representatives. I do not recall one person in the whole body, whether they opposed or supported her, who had cross words to say to Tillie Fowler. She was always well prepared, always courteous, and always somebody you admired when you served with her and got to know her.

I worked closely with her on a number of defense issues because that was her life's love. I had a chance to get to know her more closely when we had an issue in Colorado with the Air Force Academy. As you may recall, when we set up a commission, which she chaired, it was called the Fowler Commission.

I reflect on the type of respect she garnered from everybody who was around her. When we put her on that commission, we knew she would do a good job. We named the commission after her because of the respect we had for her. It was a difficult task. She did it with honor. She was very hard working and pursued it vigorously. She did a great job.

I join my colleagues in expressing my condolences to the family, and express how much we all loved her. We will miss her. May God bless.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I know I will be joined by the Presiding Officer in the shock and sadness that exists because of the loss of Tillie Fowler.

Tillie was a friend of mine long before I ever got involved in politics. I have lived in Georgia for 37 years. You can't live in Georgia without knowing the Kidd family. Tillie grew up in Milledgeville, GA. Her dad, Culver Kidd, was a longtime State senator, known as "the silver fox." He was quite a gentleman and quite a legend in his own time in Georgia politics.

Tillie was a great mentor to me during my 8 years in the House, as I know she was to the Presiding Officer. As I

told her husband Buck last night, I fought many battles with her. Of all the people I was associated with in the House and in this body, there was nobody I would rather have had in that foxhole with me when I was fighting a battle than Tillie Fowler. She was a great lady who exemplified everything that is good about the Congress, and she will be dearly missed.

I yield the floor.

MINORITY RIGHTS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, on Tuesday morning just past, we had our usual Democratic Senate caucus lunch. We discuss lots of things at those lunch meetings. But we were all struck by an appeal from our dearly beloved colleague Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, whom I consider a dear friend of long standing. I have been here over 20 years. When he rose to encourage all of us to resist subverting existing Senate rules to bypass an important process which permitted the minority in the Senate to challenge the Senate Republican majority to run roughshod over the rights of the minority, to exercise longstanding rules that permitted them a voice, Senator BYRD pleaded with us, not as a Democrat, not as a partisan, but as citizens and Senators, to fight to preserve the rights of a minority by being able to use a tactic called a filibuster as a means of protection for the minority.

We have to remember that in the recent elections for President, 57 million people voted for JOHN KERRY, and they were a minority. This Senate decides to ignore those voices and concerns of a minority of that size?

The Senators who voted against cloture recently represented 19 million more constituents than the majority. Can that be constructed as a tyranny of the minority when the Senators who were against cloture represented 19 million people more than the majority who wanted cloture? Tyranny of the minority. Outrageous.

Senator BYRD pleaded with Members to remind our Republican colleagues that such a rules change could once be at their expense, that their constituents could be deprived of their appropriate rights to a voice in legislative or executive matters.

I offer these comments as a prelude to remarks I am about to make. We have seen some ugly personal attacks recently by the Republican Party against our Senate Democratic leader, HARRY REID. He was called an obstructionist. He was referred to in sarcastic and insulting terms, as well as our former majority leader, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, and Democratic Party chairman Howard Dean.

The other side cannot beat us with the strength of their ideas. They are resorting to the same tactics they used against Senator Daschle—personal attacks on family members and attacks on character. This is shameless behavior.

Not too long ago we had an election in Georgia in which Max Cleland, a former Senator, a triple amputee, was portrayed as being soft on defense. He was being portrayed as a coward when it came to defending our country. He lost three limbs, two legs and an arm, in the defense of his Nation. And they succeeded with these shameless tactics.

We see a continuation of that. It has to stop. Whenever they are short of ideas, they are long on insults, with shameless name-calling.

Yesterday, a group calling itself the Republican Jewish Coalition attacked Senator BYRD over a historical reference he made on Hitler's rise to power in Germany. It was not an anti-Semitic remark. I resent the fact they are raising that kind of an insinuation. I am proud of my America. I am proud of my citizenship and the duty I served my country with when I wore a uniform and that I serve my country with now. I am also proud of my Jewish heritage. I resent it when any group steps up to use the shameless insinuations and challenges and insults being put forward.

Senator BYRD is known by everyone in this Chamber and people who have served for many years past as a great historian. He uses lessons from history to teach. On Tuesday just past, Senator BYRD at our luncheon issued a stern warning before we do anything irresponsible such as changing longstanding Senate rules with this notorious nuclear option which says reduce the numbers needed to object to something the majority has proposed.

That is the structure of democracy. Minority voices are to be heard. We say it in our Constitution. We say it in our courtrooms. It does not matter where.

Senator BYRD's warning came in the form of a lesson of history. He simply said that when you change the rules, you change the laws to suit your convenience, you are engaged in a tyranny. As the saying goes, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Senator BYRD talked about how a threatened filibuster in this Senate defeated FDR's plan to pack the Supreme Court. We are talking about a Democratic President. That was an option that was available according to the rules that the minority could use. Senator BYRD reminded the Senate the other day how in Germany Adolf Hitler twisted the Reichstag to pass his enabling act, the act that removed the obstructions that were blocking Hitler's plans. It was a historical lesson we should pay attention to. But now, Senator BYRD's words are being twisted by this group.

To show some of the shameless tactics they are using, look at this picture. It shows masked men, obviously suicide bombers, with a child strapped with explosives and suggesting that Democrats are responsible for this kind of a condition. It is an outrage. We will not stand silent when the Republican National Committee encourages this

kind of behavior. That is how they beat Max Cleland, and that is how they beat Senator Daschle. We are not going to let them win without telling the American people this is a shameful kind of tactic. They have no scruples when they do something like this.

No one is suggesting the Republicans are a disloyal party or that they have a particular hate design to their association. But when any group associated with the party suggests that suicide bombers are something that Democrats encourage, to trifle with the loss of life that occurred in Israel, and now we see it in Baghdad—how do we feel about our soldiers serving so bravely and gallantly in Iraq, losing their lives? How do we feel about the Iraqis who lost over 100 of their citizens in one day in a suicide bomb attack? We feel terrible.

As a consequence, when something like this, something as scurrilous as this is used, we will condemn it. We are proud of Senator BYRD. He has served this country nobly for many years. Did we disagree with him on some things? Absolutely. We disagree with each other on many occasions. That is what our responsibility is, to disagree when we think something is wrong.

I hope this group will not continue this insinuation that Democrats are disloyal, that Democrats would stand for suicide bombers who kill not only Israelis, who kill our soldiers. Is that what they want to say about Democrats? Perhaps a look in the mirror by people at the top of the administration to examine their own military service and see if they were there to protect the rights of our people.

Use a tactic like this? It cannot work, it shouldn't work, and it won't work.

TRIBUTE TO MAX M. FISHER

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it was with a great deal of sadness that I learned today that one of the great patriots in America, a man from Illinois, Max Fisher, passed away.

Max Fisher has been a great American statesman, a patriot, a public servant, an entrepreneur, and community leader. He lived in Michigan. He has some Illinois roots also. He was born in 1908 to humble beginnings. He built a company that became SPEEDWAY 76. He was the driving force behind the revitalization of the city of Detroit, and he was a close adviser to four U.S. Presidents.

I got to know him quite well during the 1990s. I was able to visit with him personally. I got to know his family. I was so impressed with his commitment to his family, his community, his people, and his Nation.

He was a great American and a righteous man. We have lost one of our great patriots in America today. I wanted to pay special tribute to Max Fisher and his family on this occasion.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT ERIC STEFFENEY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a soldier who has fallen in service to his country in Iraq. SSG Eric Steffeney of the 18th Ordnance Company died on the 23rd of February near Tuz, Iraq, when an undetected explosive detonated while he cleared the road of landmines. He was 28 years old and is survived by his mother, Annette, his father, Gary, his wife, Theresa, and their three children, Benjamin, Caitlin, and Dennis.

Staff Sergeant Steffeney grew up in Waterloo, IA, where he attended West High School. He graduated from high school early and enlisted in the Army when he was 17 years old. Initially serving as a paratrooper, Staff Sergeant Steffeney eventually joined the Army's bomb squad because he thought it would be more challenging. He was finishing his second tour of duty when he was killed.

Staff Sergeant Steffeney was described as a quiet, loyal, and responsible man who was a good soldier and an all-American boy. Indeed, it is the dedicated and courageous people such as SSG Eric Steffeney who embody the ideals of this great country best and, through the way they lived and gave their lives, keep her people standing proud and strong. I ask all of my colleagues to remember with pride and appreciation this soldier. I give my condolences to the family and friends of Staff Sergeant Steffeney who have felt this loss most deeply. I offer my most sincere gratitude and respect to SSG Eric Steffeney. This country is forever indebted to him and his colleagues for the sacrifices they have made to uphold the ideals which we treasure most as Americans.

STAFF SERGEANT WILLIAM T. ROBBINS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, Today, I rise to honor the life of SSG William Robbins. At home in Arkansas, he was, above all else, a loving family man who devoted himself entirely to his wife and his children. On the front lines of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he was a dedicated soldier who bravely fought to bring security and stability to a nation torn apart by war.

Staff Sergeant Robbins was born and raised in the small, southern Missouri town of Poplar Bluff. He spent his childhood, as many children do, playing with his friends with whom he shared a love for the outdoors. From an early age, he knew he wanted to be a soldier, and regardless of where he was or what he did, that thought was never far from his mind.

In 1990, he moved to Arkansas and settled in the North Little Rock area. It was there he met the love of his life, his future wife Kimberly, and together they would raise two beautiful daughters, 5-year-old Tristan Ellis, and Abigail, who was less than a year old. It was clear to those who knew him best that his family was his pride and joy and he cherished every minute he spent

with them. This fun-loving soul had a special affinity for children and at family gatherings was often found with the youngest of the group, playing games and bringing smiles to everyone's faces.

In the Arkansas National Guard, SSG Robbins worked full-time as administrative sergeant at the Guard's armory in Beebe. Last year, he was one of only about a dozen soldiers from the armory mobilized for duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It would prove to be a bitter-sweet time for the Robbins family; just as the family welcomed home William's mother Janice, a major in the Army Reserves returning from a deployment in Germany, they bid him farewell with prayers of a safe return.

Staff Sergeant Robbins' deployment was the first in his 11-year service in the Arkansas National Guard. While in Iraq, he was attached to the 206th Field Artillery Battalion of the 39th Infantry Brigade, and was selected to work in a military advisory capacity with the Iraqi National Guard. As American forces sought to transition more of their security and stabilization responsibilities to the Iraqi people, SSG Robbins advised and trained these civilian volunteers on infantry tactics as well as the fundamental aspects of being a soldier.

Last fall, SSG Robbins took his military leave and was able to return home for a short time. It was a much-needed reprieve from the dangers of Iraq and offered him the opportunity to return to the place he called home and spend time with the people he cared for most. It also offered him the opportunity to explain to Tristan, who was simply too young to fully understand, why her father had been away and when he would be back for good. As best he could, he explained to her the circumstances of his absence and even the possibility that he may not return. He was once a young man with a parent in the military and could relate to the lack of comprehension children often have in these situations. Relying on this perspective, as well as the natural gift he had always shown in relating to children, Tristan's father was able to provide her with some much needed comfort and understanding.

Along with many of the soldiers from the 39th, SSG Robbins' mission was soon coming to an end and he was to scheduled to return to Arkansas in late March or April. Upon his return, he was looking forward to a new job with the Arkansas National Guard at Camp Robinson's Regional Training Institute in North Little Rock. Even more so, he was looking forward to being reunited with his family. When he spoke with Kimberly, he reminded her how very much he loved her and couldn't wait to come home. When he spoke with Tristan, he told her how much he looked forward to seeing her again so he could take her in his arms and swing her like an airplane.